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2 May 1977

NOTE FOR: D/DCI/NI

SUBJECT : Euro-Communism

1. I have prepared a kind of talking paper for the Wednesday afternoon session with the representatives on the Euro-Communist paper. It sketches out some points of view on the main estimative questions, designed to get people looking at the real issues. It concludes with a schematic outline for use in dividing drafting responsibilities.

2. I also attach several studies done in OPR/ORPA with our help and encouragement on major aspects of Euro-Communism. I mentioned these to you earlier, and you wanted to see them after you had caught up with some other reading. They will be of use in the new effort. They include:

- an analysis of the PCI (June 1975, but still valid);
- an analysis of the PCF (March 1977);
- an essay on Euro-Communism (April 1977). This was done by ORPA at my suggestion, partly to isolate indicators of change rather than to attempt predictions. It is only partly successful; and
- a study of Soviet policy toward European Communism (October 1976). A good job, though it took OPR a year to do.



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Scope Note

*This memorandum is to assess the positions and prospects of the West European Communist parties. Primary attention will be paid to those of Italy and France, but it will also consider those of Spain, Portugal, and others, as well as the Euro-Communism movement generally.*

*The basic aim is to bring together in focused, analytical form the main significant information and the best estimates of the Community on where European Communism is now, how it may be changing, what factors will determine its future course, and how it is likely to affect (and be affected by) European politics on the national and European levels. We also propose to estimate the main implications for US and Alliance interests, as well as for the Soviets.*

*Various aspects of this subject have been treated in monographs by OPR, ORPA, INR, and DIA, as well as in two national estimates on Italy. The proposed paper would of course make use of these studies, but it would also aim at providing estimates on broader questions which necessarily arise in an era when European Communist parties, in or out of government, promise to be more important features of the political landscape.*

Main Estimative ProblemsI. Are European CPs Changing?

There are three general viewpoints about West European Communist Parties.

- A. Some argue that European Communism is in process of genuine, even inexorable change toward a pluralistic political role much less incompatible with classical Western interests than it once was. They credit the PCI, PCF, and PCE leaders with a large degree of authentic nationalist sentiment, an

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increasing acceptance of Western political rules as the only viable ones in Western Europe, an awareness of modern European economic realities and the constraints these imply for political and foreign policies, and a lively desire to keep the Soviet Union at arm's length. This view emphasizes the misgivings of the Soviets over trends in Western Europe Communist parties and the many clashes between the CPSU and the chief parties of Euro-Communism. It considers that the WE CPs have embarked on a course which would be difficult or impossible to reverse, and are therefore virtually committed whether they mean to be or not. In short, any threat the CPs ever did present to European societies and US interests in Europe is being ameliorated by political, cultural, and economic conditions, and the CPs will either become an acceptable part of the European system, or fade away.

-- If this view is accepted, the interesting question then becomes, What forces or factors can speed the process of salutary change?

- B. A contrasting point of view is that the WE CPs are engaging in tactical maneuvers for political advantage and that once in power they would pursue policies and exert influence in ways just as inimical as ever to US interests, the Atlantic Alliance, and West Europe generally. This school cites parallels with the pluralistic rhetoric employed by East European Communists before they came to power, the deep hostility of WE CP leaders to the parties and policies intrinsic to the structure of liberal Europe and the US-European Alliance system, the coincidence of WE CP views on international issues with those of the USSR, and the conspiratorial and disciplined nature of elements of the CPs as security threats to the state, whatever their political professions. This view acknowledges change in the tactics and even some of the strategy of the CPs, but concludes that intrinsically they remain a serious threat, perhaps more so than ever because they appear less sinister and are politically more attractive to the electorate.

-- If this view is accepted, the main question becomes, What forces or factors can most effectively contain or offset the dangers?

- C. Many analysts take an agnostic view in between, seeing contradictory tendencies in the CPs themselves, and in the roles

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they are now playing in their respective national political arenas, on the European stage and in broader international forums. This view considers that real changes have been occurring in WE CPs in the past few years, and that political imperatives and profound socio-economic trends may bring on more such change. Yet it looks skeptically at the pluralistic and independent professions of the CPs. It emphasizes the uncertainties and imponderables in the outlook, in part because it considers that CP leaders and members themselves are groping and pulled in contradictory directions. It places considerable stress on the importance of the non-Communist parties (in or out of government) and on foreign factors generally, in influencing CP decisions that have yet to be made. In short, this view allows for the possibility of profound change in the WE CPs and their role in Europe, but neither considers it inevitable nor without serious risk.

-- If this view approximates reality, the question becomes, What factors or policies would serve best to reinforce desirable change in the CPs and at the same time to discourage undesirable tendencies or contain threats?

## II. Do the Soviets Stand to Gain or Lose from Gains by WE CPs?

This question also tends to elicit different views about Soviet perceptions, not to mention objective likelihood.

- A. One approach emphasizes Moscow's cautious and spotty record with respect to supporting WE CPs, the diminishing effectiveness of Soviet financial and covert and ideological levers for controlling WE CPs as they seek to gain respectability and votes in left-of-center middle class, and Moscow's fear of the unsettling effects on its own primacy and its control of Eastern Europe that would arise from a flourishing Euro-Communist movement or a share in national power by the PCI or PCF. It also takes account of the possibility that Communist successes in Western Europe would polarize politics there and turn the non-Communists -- as well as the US -- away from detente and the kind of cooperation with the USSR which Moscow needs and wants.
- B. A contrasting view acknowledges that Euro-Communism presents problems for the USSR, but these are all relatively manageable compared to the benefits it would stand to gain from a

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strengthening of the Left in Europe generally, the growth in anti-NATO sentiment of the European governments involved, the disruption of NATO or ragged effect produced by the PCI or PCF in government, the increased chances for espionage and manipulation, and the chance that the US position would be weakened in Europe.

- C. Variations in between these views are many and infinite. One is that the Soviets probably estimate that they can neither prevent nor assure electoral success by the PCI or PCF, and that the success or failure of either would offer the USSR a complex mixture of dangers and opportunities to be handled pragmatically as they arose. In this view, Moscow's assessment would incorporate many contradictory possibilities, and no single Soviet attitude is likely to be formulated in advance of specific questions.

### III. Estimative Approach

This paper will make predictive estimates where possible, but in the nature of the problem, there are many variables and inter-dependent factors which probably preclude confident prediction. Where this is the case, the best intelligence contribution is to define these factors, indicate the relationship between them, and to the extent possible, provide insights into what indicators are likely to be significant in measuring change or the lack of it.

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Schematic

(N.B. What follows is not an outline for the paper, but simply a listing of major subject areas deserving treatment. In all cases, the section should include both the present situation and a look ahead at realistic possibilities.

- I. The Setting and the Problem
- II. The PCI and Italy
- III. The PCF and France
- IV. The Iberian CPs
- V. The Soviet Perspective
- VI. How Europe Views the Problem  
(To include Euro-Communist views of Europe and European views of the Euro-Communist problem.)
- VII. Impact on NATO of Present Trends and Future Contingencies  
(Including a realistic look at what, in fact, it would imply for NATO if the PCI or PCF gained entry into government.)
- VIII. How Europeans See the US Role and Interest  
(To include both European CPs and the non-Communist parties, as well as the European governments and the EC.)

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